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TWO NOTABLE EDUCATORS

EDWARD KIDDER GRAHAM

I

The recent sudden death of this young Southern college president was regarded with singular unanimity as a national calamity. Yet one can safely prophesy that the benign creative influence of his life and philosophy of education will continue to glow with undimmed lustre. In the brief span of four years he was "graduated" as college president with highest honors and with degrees of priceless value and distinction—educational statesman, veritable democrat, ardent lover of his fellows, idealistic interpreter of his age. In the light of intimate knowledge of a career shot through with high elation, stern vicissitude, and personal tragedy, I can truthfully say no less than this: Edward Graham was the supreme exemplar in my own experience of the constructive idealist. The era produced the man; the man helped to produce the era; and in conjunction it seemed that this born educational leader was here, at once to idealize the realities and to realize the ideals of the age. Graham was prophetic instinct incarnate—sensitive receiver of the inarticulate aspirations of a people and dynamic transmitter of light, energy, and inspiration to the farthest reaches of the commonwealth. The widening success of his empirical philosophy of extension—Wisconsin writ anew as North Carolina—was observed with vivid interest and outspoken approval by American educational leaders, and hailed with almost clamorous gratification by the people of North Carolina. The democracy of his faith was integral with his spirit—not only finding expression in his utterances, but furnishing the essential inspiration for his constructive policies—in discipline, in self-government, in administration, in social service and university extension.

II

To the Brewsters of the Mayflower voyage one may, if he will, find a focal point of origin for the inflexible will and high religious voltage of Edward Kidder Graham. Beneath the granite

surface of his Highland Scotch ancestors, the McAllisters, glowed the same zeal for personal liberty and socialized democracy which distinctively marked the young educational leader of to-day. Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, on October 11, 1876, son of Archibald and Eliza Owen (Barry) Graham, he was almost predestined, by the educational accomplishments of his paternal forbears, to realize his unquestioned genius in that high and noble field of social service, education. During his college career, at the University of North Carolina, he was the acknowledged leader of his fellows, touching life at every point and enriching life with this contact; excelling in the tasks to which he set his hand, his mind, and heart; achieving notable distinction as a facile, quick-witted debater and compelling thought in speeches of fine literary texture and oratorical effectiveness. As his class-mate, I have always felt that the most signal honor he achieved during his college days was found in the prophetic circumstance that his fellows spoke of him as a man who would make an ideal president of the University of North Carolina.

III

As I look back upon his preliminary career as educator—as professor of English literature, dean of the college of liberal arts, and acting-president of his alma mater—there seems to be a happy fitness in this word, preliminary. For his career as college president seemed at once a culmination and a consummation. Endowed with a finely perceptive curiosity and a keen sensitiveness to subtle values, he escaped as preceptor the blight of the sheerly academic through a vital, unfailing interest in the human element of those he touched and molded. Advanced studies at Columbia University widened the scope of his basic comprehension of the history and cultural rootage of English civilization; and served both to clarify the perspective and tone the background of his experience.

In literary criticism he inclined to the gracious and leisurely manner of the essayist; and he loved to give rein to his fancy in whimsical reflection of the moods and experiences of the hour. The note and nature of his personal charm find but imperfect expression in occasional papers—"The Necessary Melancholy of

Bachelors," "The Poetry of John Charles McNeill," "Teaching Literature in the College," "The Essays of Samuel McChord Crothers." Literature inspired him—but not to intensive research, academic diversions, or the writing of books. Literature, as well as oratory, he loved—not as an end in itself, but as a keen and glittering instrument for making cultural, social, and spiritual truth prevail.

Graham was a sociologist by instinct, a student of Marx and Bagehot and Kidd; and he once seriously considered devoting his life to social studies. In a certain sense it may be said that he carried out his purpose. The ablest and most brilliant of his contributions to the thinking of to-day, the essay "Culture and Commercialism," the "Inaugural Address," and the undelivered address prepared for the Johns Hopkins University commencement, June, 1918, entitled "The American University and the New Nationalism," for all the fundamental educational philosophy and national patriotism they embody, are essentially the works of a gifted sociologist, works culturally and socially integrated through the transmuting influence of social democracy.

Culture, which Graham defines as "truth alive"—the complete art of life—is "not a knowledge of the creeds of religion, art, science, or literature. As American civilization confidently follows it, and it does follow it, it is not a study of perfection through 'coming to know'; it is the development of the spirit through work—it is *achievement touched by fine feeling*." The truly cultural principle in American life, in Graham's view, is the "belief that Democracy and Work are the heart of its civilization." The basic principle underlying many of his public utterances, the very key-note of his educational philosophy, is found in the assertion: "To say that culture in its broadest and most significant sense may be realized through material achievement is as axiomatic as to say that progress toward perfection may be made through sincere living." To this fertile and creative philosophy Graham gave wide currency and strong enforcement by means of many public speeches and addresses before educational and other national organizations in many parts of the country. Graham was a speaker of rare charm and

true power; at times the orator of classic sweep and moving eloquence; always finished, restrained, and inspiring in utterance. Conspicuous for insight and understanding are his papers on the history of Southern oratory (1788-1865) in *The South in the Building of the Nation*.

IV

At different periods of Graham's career I have had occasion to write of him and to interpret the needs of the University of North Carolina in the light of past and immediate experience. In an appreciation of his life and work, published on the occasion of his selection as acting-president, I used these words: "Material resources, costly laboratories, extensive equipment alone will not suffice to constitute a great university. Deeper than all, back of all, lie the intellectual and spiritual resources of the men who embody the educational principles and scholarly ideals of that university. The supreme need of to-day is to release this vast, pent-up force into channels of service and utility to the great masses of the people. To minister to the practical, the intellectual, and the spiritual needs of the people, vital contacts must be established between the university and the people. It is not enough for the people to come to the university. The university must go to the people, must mingle with and touch the life of the people, if it is to answer the needs of the people."¹ In an estimate of him as the recently elected president, with especial reference to the subject of administration, I expressed the view that "the ideal which he has ever held before him for the college has been the democracy which breeds self-mastery, and develops that higher form for freedom which has been justly defined as the will to be responsible for oneself."² In a survey of the history of the University of North Carolina, at the time of Graham's inauguration as president, I spoke of him as follows: "A democrat to his finger-tips, a scholar and an essayist, he enters upon his task with full vision of the evident destiny of the institution he has been called upon to direct. He conceives

¹"Edward Kidder Graham": *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N. C.), August 10, 1913.

²"The President": *University of North Carolina Magazine*.

the whole State in all the manifestations of its life as the immediate concern of the university. 'Extension,' he interprets in his inaugural address, 'not as thinly stretching out its resources to the State boundaries for the purpose of protective expansion, nor as carrying down to those without the castle walls broken bits of learning, but as the radiating power of a new passion, carrying in natural circulation the unified culture of the race to all parts of the body politic.' . . . Here is an attempt to realize, in the light of modern social theories and ideas, the true mission of the university in a democratic State, and the spectacle is one of national interest."³

To-day, with these inadequate phrases as a sort of rough touchstone, one may temper one's sorrow in gratified retrospection and the sure conviction that the deeply lamented young educator fulfilled so nobly and admirably, within the immitigable limitations of space and time, the promise of his career, the spirit of his ideal, and the hopes and aspirations of the people of his native State.

In the act of taking office, he won the assent of the people to his doctrine that the university campus be made co-extensive with the boundaries of the State. At once he began, as he phrased it, to "put the university as head of the State's educational system in warm, sensitive touch with every problem in North Carolina life, small and great." In matters of college administration and discipline, he wrought what appeared to be a miracle—the virtual abolition, through replacing "fearsome prodding" from without the student body by self-control and self-determination from within, of punitive discipline for deliberate misconduct. In all administrative matters he was equally radical in placing administration on a fundamentally democratic basis; and every step he took was actuated by the will to place the university "in harmony with the spirit of modern democracy."

It is needless to enumerate here the extension activities of the University of North Carolina, some novel, some of the sort made familiar by universities of the type of Wisconsin, all

³"The University of North Carolina: Inauguration of President Graham." *The Nation*, May 6, 1915.

vigorous, effective, popularly appreciated; for they attracted the approving attention of the entire country and were eagerly imitated by other institutions. Graham's whole aim was to realize at North Carolina his definition: "The American State university of the twentieth century is an organism of the productive State, striving to express in tangible realities the aspirations of present democracy, as it adjusts itself to the liberations of a new humanism." Likewise, in his Johns Hopkins address, he forthrightly says: "The whole function of education is to make straight and clear the way for the liberation of the spirit of men from the tyranny of place and time, not by running away from the world, but by mastering it." Nowhere has Graham better interpreted his talismanic word, extension, than in these words from his inaugural address: "The organic centre of all its [the State's] actions and interactions for liberating its efficiency and its life to a higher plane of productivity is in raising the productivity of all the men engaged in it by liberating all of their wholesome faculties."

V

No one who came into personal contact or association with this remarkable man could escape the pervasive influence of his personality or be blind to the simplicity, strength, and dignity of his nature. Erect, tall, and fragile in figure; masterful in bearing; with challenging blue-gray eyes; a beautiful, delicate face, the face of a poet—he was a strange blend of frankness and exclusiveness, of gayety and seriousness, of whimsicality and gravity, of boyishness and maturity, of engaging outspokenness and invincible shyness. Another great American of to-day, Woodrow Wilson, with whom Graham had many points of similarity, in broad vision, ennobling democracy, and moral fervor, recently said of him with justice: "By gift and character alike he was qualified to play a distinguished part and was playing it to the admiration of all who knew him."

ARCHIBALD HENDERSON.

University of North Carolina.

KIRBY FLOWER SMITH

The death of Kirby Flower Smith, Professor of Latin in the Johns Hopkins University, came as a great shock to all those who had been associated with him in a more or less intimate way, and to none more than those who had been his students at Johns Hopkins. What a loss his death means to the university is understood only by those who realize that the university was his life, that he lived and breathed for the university and for its highest ideals, and that, with his keen, sane judgment in practical matters, his fine and sure taste in literature and art, and his optimism and genial comradeship, he represented the best that the university can produce. In the field of classical scholarship in America his place cannot be filled: few, indeed, are they who can bring to the study of the Classics the same painstaking care in minute details along with such lively imagination and the ability to enter into the spirit of the finest and noblest of a past age: and in this day of the glorification of the material and tangible, when the Humanities have to wage such a struggle for a place in any scheme of education, it is extremely disastrous to the cause that so able an exponent of them should have dropped from the ranks.

Though Professor Smith was very much at home in the field of Romance Languages and made a number of contributions to that study, by far the greater part of his life and effort was given to the study of the Classics. His work in the various spheres of Latin literature by which he is best known was of the most thorough and careful kind. In the study of an author or of a period or type of literature no details were too insignificant for study. To mention as illustration his most recent work, *Tibullus, The Elegies*, no other single work in this sphere of literature treats so exhaustively all the various motifs found in the type, and the origin and growth of the literary form; and it will undoubtedly remain the standard work in the English language. On the other hand, no author or character to him lived entirely in the past. For him always the past lived again in the present. Thus it was that with his lectures on Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid, and Martial, given in various places throughout the South to

audiences which for the most part had no interest in Roman life and Roman characters in themselves, or, in fact, in any characters that did not live and move before their eyes, he made antiquity live again and interpreted the thoughts and emotions that are common to all ages. During these lectures in the South he became endeared to the hearts of many who were quick to recognize in him the fine instincts of the scholar and the sweetness and charm of the cultivated gentleman.

Of the work that he published during his lifetime one does not wish to speak in detail at present. There will be found many to give it due recognition, and it will stand the test of the most exacting criticism. He was trained under a teacher whose devotion to his chosen field of study called forth the best effort from his students, and with his natural inclination to thoroughness he carried the tradition over into his own department after his appointment to the chair of Latin at Johns Hopkins. His works stand as a testimony to that. But only those who studied under him know fully what a spirit of thoroughness he brought to the performance of daily work. In this matter he taught not by precept but by example. Yet no piece of work, even the most minute, was altogether dry when he approached it. His rare humor and the lightness of touch with which he handled everything always redeemed what would otherwise have seemed uninspiring routine. Few had his literary gifts and fewer still his ability to inspire in his students confidence and respect for himself and for his work. As a scholar and teacher he needs no eulogy: he lived forever in the hearts of those who for even a brief period enjoyed the rare privilege of coming under the spell of his genial spirit, and of being introduced by him to the thought of a past great age which he clearly understood and faithfully interpreted.

T. S. DUNCAN.

University of the South.